

TICKHO NESA/SO/P 6981 SPECIAL SEARCH

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SUBJ

TAKE 1 OF 3 -- WOUNDING OF SOVIET OFFICER IN DRA DESCRIBED

PM091154

<> MOSCOW <><>KRASNAYA ZVEZDA<><> IN RUSSIAN 7 JAN 84 SECOND EDITION P 3

((ARTICLE BY COLONEL A. PIMENOV UNDER THE RUBRIC "COMMUNISTS

IN COMBAT FORMATION": "CAPTAIN SAMSONOV'S DREAM"))

((TEXT)) THE BATTALION COMMANDER SUMMONED SENIOR LIEUTENANT

SERGEY SAMSONOV, COMMANDER OF AN ARMORED PLATOON.

"YOU WILL TAKE TWO TANKS TO ESCORT THE CONVOY," THE BATTALION
 COMMANDER NAMED THE POINTS ON THE ROUTE AND SPECIFIED WHAT THE
 MISSION WAS.

"IS EVERYTHING CLEAR?"

"ABSOLUTELY!"

THE MOTORIZED CONVOYS CARRYING FOOD AND OTHER NATIONAL ECONOMIC
 FREIGHT FOR THE AFGHAN WORKING PEOPLE ARE FAVORITE TARGETS FOR
 THE DUSHMANS' ATTACKS. THEY OPERATE LIKE SPIDERS: THEY LAY A
 NETWORK OF MINES ON THE ROAD WHILE THEY THEMSELVES LIE IN AMBUSH.
 THAT IS WHY OUR TROOPS ASSIGN TANKS OR INFANTRY COMBAT VEHICLES
 TO GUARD THE CONVOYS. SENIOR LT SAMSONOV HAD HAD TO PERFORM
 SIMILAR MISSIONS ESCORTING CONVOYS ON DOZENS OF OCCASIONS; IT
 WAS ALREADY A FAMILIAR JOB. HE DECIDED TO PLACE ONE TANK CLOSER
 TO THE HEAD OF THE CONVOY WHILE HE HIMSELF RODE IN THE OTHER,
 BRINGING UP THE REAR, WHERE IT WAS MORE DANGEROUS. (THE DUSHMANS
 USUALLY TRY TO CUT OFF THE LAST VEHICLES).

...FOLLOWING THE BENDS IN THE ROAD, THE CONVOY ENTERED THE
 MOUNTAINS. HERE IN THE FOOTHILLS THE LANDSCAPE IS NOT AS
 DEPRESSINGLY MONOTONOUS AS IT IS IN THE MOUNTAINS -- THE HORIZON
 IS WIDER AND THERE ARE BUSHES ALONG THE ROAD. BUT SENIOR LT SAMSONOV
 WAS NOT ADMIRING THE LANDSCAPE. HE WAS SURVEYING AND ASSESSING
 THE TERRAIN BY DIFFERENT YARDSTICKS: WHERE WAS THE AMBUSH MOST
 LIKELY TO BE?

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THE ROAD TURNED SHARPLY TO THE RIGHT AND THE CONVEY WAS HIDDEN ROUND THE BEND. "IT MIGHT VERY WELL BE HERE," SAMSONOV THOUGHT, AND OVER THE TANK INTERCOM HE ISSUED THE ORDER TO THE CREW: "STEP UP YOUR OBSERVATION!" AT THAT MOMENT THE TANK SHOOK SHARPLY AS THOUGH ONE OF ITS TRACKS HAD STRUCK AN ENORMOUS ROCK. AN EXPLOSION WAS HEARD AT THE SAME TIME AS THE JOLT, AND THERE WERE NO DOUBTS LEFT: A MINE.

A TANK AND SEVERAL DOZEN TRUCKS HAD PASSED AHEAD, BUT THE EXPLOSION HAD ONLY HAPPENED NOW.

"~~WE'VE HIT A VACUUM MINE,~~" SAMSONOV COMMENTED TO HIMSELF. HE HAD FREQUENTLY SEEN THESE BRITISH-PRODUCED ARTICLES. FAMILIAR WITH THE DUSHMANS' HABIT OF SETTING UP AMBUSHES NEXT TO LAID MINES, SAMSONOV ISSUED THE NECESSARY ORDERS TO THE CREW. AND JUST IN TIME: THE BANDITS OPENED FIRE ON THE TANK. A FIRE STARTED TO BLAZE FROM A DIRECT TO THE BARREL CARRYING ADDITIONAL FUEL. SAMSONOV ORDERED EVERYONE TO ABANDON THE TANK. THEY JUMPED OUT AND LAY DOWN BY THE ROADSIDE.

"IS EVERYONE ALIVE?" SAMSONOV SHOUTED.

"YES!" CAME THE CHEERFUL VOICES.

SAMSONOV COULD ALREADY SEE THAT EVERYONE WAS ALIVE, BUT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO HIM TO HEAR THOSE VOICES AND TO UNDERSTAND THE CONDITION OF HIS SUBORDINATES FROM THEIR INTONATION. HE NOTED WITH SATISFACTION THAT THE SOLDIERS WERE EXPERIENCING NEITHER PANIC NOR FEAR. FROM THE SOUNDS OF THE SHOTS THEY ESTIMATED THE BANDITS' NUMBERS -- THERE SEEMED TO BE 10-12 OF THEM, NO MORE.

"TOLERABLE," WAS HOW HE ASSESSED THE SITUATION. BUT HE REALIZED THAT REINFORCEMENTS WERE NEEDED. HE DECIDED TO SEND TWO MEN TO THE NEXT POST GUARDING THAT SECTOR OF THE ROAD.

HE SENT PRIVATE V. IKROMOV, A GUNNER, AND PRIVATE B. KHOLMIRZAYEV, AN ASSISTANT GUNNER. HE DESIGNATED IKROMOV AS THE LEADER. AS THEY LEFT HE INSTRUCTED THEM:

"MOVE QUICKLY, IN SHORT DASHES. AND KEEP A GOOD LOOKOUT."

THE SOLDIERS DISAPPEARED INTO THE BUSHES, FOLLOWED BY SAMSONOV AND DRIVER PRIVATE S. ZINCHENKO. THEY TOOK TURNS RUNNING. EACH RAN 15-20 METERS, DROPPED TO THE GROUND, AND MOVED TO ONE SIDE. AFTER ANOTHER DASH THE DUSHMANS FIRED FROM A GRENADE THROWER ON THE PLACE WHERE SERGEY ZINCHENKO HAD DROPPED. THE BLAST RAISED A CLOUD OF DUST AND SAMSONOV RUSHED TO THE SPOT.

"ARE YOU ALIVE?" HE ASKED HOARSELY, DROPPING DOWN NEXT TO HIS COMRADE. ZINCHENKO GROANED. HE WAS WOUNDED IN THE LEGS. SAMSONOV RAPIDLY APPLIED BANDAGES AND TOURNIQUETS. HE REALIZED THE SOLDIER WAS TOTALLY UNABLE TO MOVE. HE HOISTED HIM ONTO HIS BACK, SLUNG HIS MACHINEGUN OVER HIS CHEST AND, SELECTING THE THICKEST BUSHES, MOVED FORWARD.

"COMRADE SENIOR LIEUTENANT," ZINCHENKO BREATHED IN HIS EAR.

"LEAVE ME IN THE BUSHES AND COME BACK LATER, GET OUT OF HERE..."

"STOP THAT!" SAMSONOV SILENCED HIM. "TAKE A CLOSER LOOK ROUND." AND HE JOKED: "YOU CAN SEE BETTER FROM UP THERE."

THE JUNE SUN WAS BLAZING MERCILESSLY. SWEAT STUNG HIS EYES; HIS MOUTH WAS PARCHED.

"NEVER MIND, SERGEY, JUST BE PATIENT," HE REASSURED ZINCHENKO, ALTHOUGH THE LATTER WAS SILENT, MERELY EMITTING RASPING BREATHS

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FROM HIS PARCHED THROAT.
RISING AGAIN WITH HIS LOAD, SAMSONOV SUDDENLY SAW A DUSHMAN
DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF HIM, ABOUT 15 METERS AWAY. THE LATTER ROSE
UP FROM BEHIND A BUSH AND BEGAN TO AIM HIS RIFLE AT SAMSONOV.
FOR A MINUTE THEY STOOD LOOKING AT EACH OTHER. SAMSONOV IMMEDIATELY
THOUGHT NOT OF HIMSELF BUT OF THE WOUNDED SOLDIER ON HIS LEFT
SHOULDER. HE REALIZED THAT IT WAS FUTILE TO TRY TO AVOID THE
BULLET IN THIS SITUATION BUT NONETHELESS HE MOVED SHARPLY TO THE
LEFT, DROPPING TO THE GROUND WITH SERGEY ZINCHENKO. AND IT SEEMED
AS THOUGH HE FIRST FELT THE POWERFUL BLOW TO HIS RIGHT SHOULDER
AND ONLY THEN SAW THE YELLOW-WHITE TONGUE OF FLAME FROM THE MUZZLE
OF THE DUSHMAN'S RIFLE.

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<> REF PM091154 MOSCOW <><>KRASNAYA ZVEZDA<><> RUSSIAN 7 JAN///THE DUSHMAN'S RIFLE.

TAKE 2 OF 3 -- WOUNDING OF SOVIET OFFICER IN DRA DESCRIBED

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((TEXT)) HE DECIDED TO GET UP, PUTTING HIS WEIGHT ON HIS RIGHT HAND, AND COLLAPSED ONTO THE GROUND WITH A GROAN. HIS LIFELESS ARM BUCKLED BEHIND HIS BACK. HE WIGGLED HIS FINGERS -- THEY WERE WORKING NORMALLY, BUT HIS ARM DID NOT OBEY HIM -- HE HAD TO DRAG IT FROM BEHIND HIS BACK USING HIS OTHER HAND.

HE HEARD THE MUFFLED ROAR OF ENGINES, BUT HE COULD NOT MAKE OUT WHETHER THE SOUND WAS COMING FROM THE CONVOY RECEDING INTO THE MOUNTAINS OR FROM THE OTHER DIRECTION. ZINCHENKO HELPED SAMSONOV TO MAKE A BANDAGE AND PLACED HIS ARM UNDER HIS BELT TO STOP IT DANGLING, AND THEY BEGAN TO THINK ABOUT HOW TO ADVANCE FURTHER. ZINCHENKO AGAIN SUGGESTED THAT THE PLATOON COMMANDER LEAVE ON HIS OWN, BUT THE LATTER WOULD NOT HEAR OF IT. SAMSONOV TRIED TO CARRY THE SOLDIER, HOLDING ON TO HIM WITH ONE HAND, BUT IT PROVED BEYOND HIS POWER. THEN HE LOWERED HIM INTO AN IRRIGATION CANAL AND BEGAN TO PUSH HIM THROUGH THE WATER. IT WAS EASIER THAT WAY. SOON PRIVATE KHOLMIRZAYAEV BROUGHT TWO INFANTRY COMBAT VEHICLES FROM THE POST. THE WOUNDED WERE SENT TO THE MEDICAL STATION. AND HOSPITAL LIFE BEGAN FOR SENIOR LT-SERGEY SAMSONOV -- WITH MEDICINES AND INJECTIONS... THERE WERE SEVERAL HOSPITALS. THE BROKEN BONE OBSTINATELY REFUSED TO KNIT. BUT TIME, THE YOUTH OF HIS VIGOROUS ORGANISM, AND THE DOCTORS' EFFORTS DID THEIR WORK. THE LONG-AWAITED DAY CAME WHEN HE SAID GOODBYE TO THE HOSPITALS, THE DOCTORS, AND ALL THOSE WHO HAD HAD A PART IN TREATING THE OFFICER.

SAYING GOODBYE TO HIS PATIENT, ONE OF THE DOCTORS INQUIRED:

"WELL, SERGEY NIKOLAYEVICH, WHERE WILL FATE TAKE YOU NOW?"

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"WHEREVER WE SEND FATE," SAMSONOV JOKED. AND ADDED IN EARNEST:

"I WILL ASK TO BE SENT TO MY TANKMEN..."

THE DOCTOR SAID NOTHING, BUT MERELY LOOKED EXPRESSIVELY AT HIS RIGHT SHOULDER. SERGEY UNDERSTOOD THE LOOK AND SMILED.

"IT'S OKAY, DOCTOR." AND TO CONVINCE HIM HE MOVED THE SHOULDER VIGOROUSLY. "YOU SEE?"

"I SEE, I SEE."

SAMSONOV COULD HEAR IN THE DOCTOR'S VOICE DOUBT AS TO THE CORRECTNESS OF THE DECISION HE HAD MADE. HE DID NOT WANT TO LEAVE WITH THIS FEELING OF DISAGREEMENT, SO SERGEY STAYED ON A FEW MORE MINUTES AND TOLD THE DOCTOR OF AN INCIDENT WHICH HAD NOT SIMPLY BEEN CARVED INTO HIS MEMORY BUT HAD REMAINED IN HIS BRAIN AS AN UNHEALED WOUND.

...IT WAS IN LATE DECEMBER, BEFORE THE NEW YEAR OF 1982. A DELEGATION OF AFGHANS FROM THE PROVINCE CENTER HAD COME TO THE TOWN. THEY REPORTED THAT A HAMLET HAD BEEN ATTACKED BY BANDITS WHO HAD KILLED SEVERAL YOUTH ORGANIZATION ACTIVISTS AND HAD TAKEN THE LEADER AWAY ALIVE -- THAT MEANT THEY WOULD TORTURE AND HUMILIATE HIM. COULD THEY HAVE SOME HELP?

THE TWO INFANTRY COMBAT VEHICLES AND THE TANK ADVANCED TOWARD THE HAMLET. THEY WERE HURRYING WHILE IT WAS STILL LIGHT. THEY DID NOT FIND THE BANDITS IN THE HAMLET, BUT THE LATTER HAD HAD THE TIME TO DO THEIR DIRTY WORK. THEY HAD TIED THE YOUNG MAN, ALIVE, TO A TREE TRUNK. THEY HAD FLAYED THE SKIN FROM HIS BELLY AND BACK, REMOVING IT AS FAR AS HIS NECK, TYING IT IN A KNOT...

"WE WERE ALL SHAKEN BY THAT CANNIBALISTIC FEROCITY," SERGEY SAMSONOV ENDED HIS STORY. "AND THAT WAS JUST ONE INCIDENT OUT OF MANY." HE FELL SILENT AND ASKED QUIETLY, THOUGHTFULLY, AS THOUGH HE WERE TALKING TO HIMSELF: "WHO WILL HELP THEM IF WE DON'T?"

AND RECENTLY THE EDITORIAL OFFICE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM S. SAMSONOV, NOW A CAPTAIN. A TERSE, RESTRAINED LETTER, BUT BEHIND THOSE SPARE LINES YOU COULD STILL UNDERSTAND THAT IT WAS HARD FOR THE MAN. THE LETTER CAME FROM A MILITARY HOSPITAL NEAR MOSCOW. THE OFFICER REPORTED THAT AFTER HE HAD BEEN WOUNDED COMPLICATIONS HAD ARISEN AND THEY HAD AMPUTATED HIS HAND.

"IN THE FIRST DAYS IT WAS VERY HARD. THE NURSE OBVIOUSLY NOTICED AND DID EVERYTHING TO TRY TO DISTRACT ME FROM MY UNPLEASANT THOUGHTS. ONCE SHE BROUGHT ME A NEWSPAPER CUTTING AND SAID:

"LOOK, READ THIS. THAT MAN HAD A FAR HARDER TIME BUT HE HELD OUT." THE ARTICLE DESCRIBED A YOUNG POLITICAL WORKER, THE OFFICER A. KISELEV, WHO LOST BOTH ARMS SAVING THE LIFE OF A SOLDIER.

I HAD READ ABOUT KISELEV BEFORE AND HAD ONCE DESCRIBED HIM TO THE SOLDIERS AT POLITICAL CLASSES BUT WHEN I WAS IN A SIMILAR SITUATION MYSELF I SOMEHOW FORGOT ABOUT THE INCIDENT. I REREAD THE ARTICLE AND THOUGHT: IT REALLY WAS MANY TIMES HARDER FOR HIM, WHY SHOULD I LOSE HEART?"

SERGEY CHEERED UP AND TOOK HEART: PERHAPS HE, LIKE KISELEV, WOULD BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE SERVING IN THE ARMY? HAVING THOUGHT LONG AND HARD ABOUT IT, HE DECIDED TO WRITE TO THE EDITORIAL OFFICE. HE CLOSED THE LETTER WITH A REQUEST: "COULD YOU HELP ME TO ARRANGE A MEETING WITH CAPTAIN A. KISELEV?"

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<> REF PM091154 MOSCOW <><>KRASNAYA ZVEZDA<><> RUSSIAN 7 JAN///CAPTAIN
A. KISELEV?

TAKE 3 OF 3 -- WOUNDING OF SOVIET OFFICER IN DRA DESCRIBED

PM091156

((TEXT)) I TELEPHONED CAPT ALEKSANDR KISELEV AT THE V.I.

LENIN MILITARY-POLITICAL ACADEMY IMMEDIATELY ON READING

CAPTAIN SAMSONOV'S LETTER. I COULDN'T GET THROUGH TO KISELEV,

SO I PHONED HIM AT HIS APARTMENT THAT EVENING.

"I HAVE EVERY SYMPATHY WITH HIM," WAS ALEKSANDR'S REACTION,

"AND CERTAINLY I AM PREPARED TO MEET WITH HIM."

...SO WE WENT TO THE HOSPITAL. BEFORE GOING INTO SERGEY

SAMSONOV'S WARD WE MET WITH VALERIY AFANASYEVICH TOPILSKIY, THE

DOCTOR TREATING HIM, AND INQUIRED ABOUT SAMSONOV'S CONDITION.

VALERIY AFANASYEVICH SMILED AND SAID:

"HE'S FINE AND IN GOOD SPIRITS NOW. COME ALONG AND SEE FOR
YOURSELVES."

IT WAS NOT EVIDENT AT FIRST GLANCE: SAMSONOV APPEARED ILL

AT EASE AND SOMEWHAT WARY. THIS DID NOT LAST LONG, HOWEVER.

ALEKSANDR KISELEV IS AN ENGAGING SORT OF PERSON, AFFABLE WITH

A WINNING SMILE, AND THE TENSION OF THOSE FIRST FEW MOMENTS

INSTANTLY EVAPORATED. SERGEY SAMSONOV BEGAN TO SMILE TOO,

AS IF TO CONFIRM THE DOCTOR'S ASSURANCES.

THIN, WIRY AND OF AVERAGE HEIGHT, HE GAVE THE IMPRESSION OF

A MAN OF STAMINA AND DEXTERITY. HE AND KISELEV GOT ALONG

IMMEDIATELY AND STARTED AN ANIMATED CONVERSATION. WHEN I LOOKED

AT THE TWO CAPTAINS, IT OCCURRED TO ME HOW CLOSE THEY WERE IN

SPIRIT, IN TERMS OF THEIR VIEWS AND LIFE STANCE, DESPITE THE

OUTWARD DIFFERENCES. NEITHER OF THEM HAD SET OUT TO PERFORM A

FEAT; THE CIRCUMSTANCES HAD REQUIRED THEM TO ACT WITH DETERMINATION,

COURAGE, AND BRAVERY AND, WITHOUT THINKING, THEY HAD ACTED IN

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ACCORDANCE WITH THE DUTY OF THE SOVIET SOLDIER -- PATRIOT AND INTERNATIONALIST...

FOR DISPLAYING BRAVERY IN THE EXECUTION OF HIS INTERNATIONAL DUTY CAPT SAMSONOV HAD RECEIVED TWO ORDERS OF THE RED STAR. IT WAS WITH A QUESTION ABOUT THE ORDERS THAT THE CONVERSATION BEGAN. NOT JUST ABOUT WHAT THEY WERE GIVEN FOR, IN WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES THE OFFICER DISPLAYED BRAVERY, BUT MORE, PERHAPS, ABOUT THE SOURCE OF THAT BRAVERY... SERGEY SAMSONOV HAD SPENT HIS WHOLE LIFE IN MILITARY QUARTERS. FOUR YEARS PREVIOUSLY HIS FATHER, NIKOLAY DMITRIYEVICH SAMSONOV, HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED TO THE RESERVE AS A COLONEL AFTER MORE THAN 30 YEARS IN THE ARMY. SAMSONOV HAD BEEN IN MANY GARRISONS IN HIS TIME, AND THE FAMILY REGARDED MOVING FROM PLACE TO PLACE AS A NATURAL PART OF LIFE. IF YOU GET A POSTING YOU HAVE TO GO. THIS STATE IMPERATIVE HAD ALWAYS BEEN THE DOMINANT, GOVERNING FACTOR IN THE SAMSONOV FAMILY. THERE HAD NEVER BEEN ANY COMPLAINT OR DISCUSSION ABOUT IT -- IT STOOD OUTSIDE ALL THIS, AN OBJECTIVE NECESSITY. WHEN IT CAME TO GENERATING THIS ATMOSPHERE IN THE FAMILY MUCH DEPENDED ON NIKOLAY DMITRIYEVICH'S WIFE, ANNA ANISIMOVNA. THE ALL-PERVADING VIEW OF MILITARY SERVICE AS A MATTER OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE IS WHAT MADE SERGEY CHOOSE HIS CAREER AND ENTER THE KHARKOV GUARDS HIGHER TANK COMMAND SCHOOL NAMED FOR THE UKRAINIAN SSR SUPREME SOVIET. IT WAS THERE THAT HE JOINED THE COMMUNIST PARTY.

HIS SPELL IN THE RED BANNER KIEV MILITARY DISTRICT MADE A SPECIAL IMPRESSION ON SERGEY SAMSONOV. NOT JUST BECAUSE IT WAS THERE THAT HE UNDERWENT HIS LIEUTENANT'S TRAINING. BUT ALSO BECAUSE, AS HE SAW IT, HE HAD HAD A MAJOR STROKE OF LUCK: HE HAD BEEN ASSIGNED TO A LEADING REGIMENT.

SAMSONOV LOOKED BACK ON THOSE DAYS AND RECALLED WITH GREAT AFFECTION THE NAMES OF THE OFFICERS WHO WERE HIS TEACHERS -- LIEUTENANT COLONEL M. SHATIN, MAJOR P. CHVANDV, SENIOR LIEUTENANT B. MELESHEV. THEY HAD TAUGHT HIM NOT ONLY MILITARY SKILLS BUT ALSO HOW TO PERFORM HIS MILITARY DUTY CONSCIENTIOUSLY AND SELFLESSLY...

THE CONVERSATION WENT ON FOR A GOOD WHILE. IT WAS GRATIFYING TO SEE SERGEY CHEERFUL AND EBULLIENT. BUT FROM TIME TO TIME ANXIETY WOULD APPEAR IN HIS FACE, LIKE THE SHADOW OF A PASSING CLOUD. IS THERE SOMETHING WORRYING YOU? HE WAS EVASIVE:

"NO, NOTHING."

OUR MEETING TOOK PLACE ON NEW YEAR'S EVE AND AS WE WERE ABOUT TO LEAVE I ASKED SAMSONOV WHAT HE HOPED THE NEW YEAR WOULD BRING, WHAT HIS DREAMS WERE.

"TO REMAIN IN THE ARMY AND GET BACK TO WORK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE -- THAT'S MY DREAM."

I WISHED HIM EVERY HAPPINESS AND TOLD HIM I HOPED HIS DREAM WOULD COME TRUE.

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